



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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FISHERIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE DISCUSSES FIVE MAJOR ITEMS

Five major items pertaining to the Nation's commercial fisheries discussed at a recent meeting of the American Fisheries Advisory Committee, were enumerated today by the Department of the Interior. The meeting, eleventh of the group, was held in Seattle, Washington, in August.

The major problems were:

The actual and potential effect of foreign fishing activities in the eastern part of the Bering Sea on the U. S. fishery;

The effects of territorial sea adjustments on the fisheries of the Pacific Northwest area;

The increasing impact of dams and other multiple water-use projects upon the commercial fisheries;

A review of legislation introduced in the 86th Congress to modify the Saltonstall-Kennedy Act, which is an act designed to aid the domestic commercial fishing industry to meet its problems in the biological, technological, and marketing fields;

A discussion of the relative balance achieved by the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries in its allocations of Saltonstall-Kennedy funds to various activities and programs designed to help the fishing industry help itself, but with emphasis on the marketing activities of the Bureau.

The Committee expressed growing and continuing concern over the increased foreign fishing activities in the Eastern Bering Sea and urged the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries to consider the possibilities of over-exploitation and the resultant potential depletion of fish stocks.

Inquiries were made relative to the extent of present American fishing operations in the area, the possible short- and long-range effects of foreign fishing activities on the historic fishing rights of U. S. citizens, and the potential areas of disagreement between the U. S. and foreign governments in the future.

The Committee also urged the Bureau to secure all possible data relative to the species and the amounts harvested and to particularly guard against any encroachment on the halibut grounds farther to the south which have been historically harvested on a sustained yield basis by American and Canadian fishermen under joint conservation policies.

In regard to territorial waters problems, the Committee recommended that since there was no agreement reached at the last International Conference on the Law of the Sea on fishing rights, the U. S. should stay with its original position of holding to the 3-mile limit.

The Committee also suggested that consideration should be given to bilateral or multilateral agreements with foreign nations relative to the utilization of fishery resources off foreign shores.

The Committee placed emphasis on the value of research and recommended continued research on alternate methods of replacing lost or downgraded salmon spawning areas resulting from multiple water-use projects.

The Committee questioned the desirability of recent Congressional legislation proposing the apportionment of Saltonstall-Kennedy funds to State conservation agencies, educational institutions, and private research organizations, expressing the belief that the present contract program of the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries was more desirable from the standpoint of greatest immediate benefit to the industry and public.

In the discussions concerning allocations of funds to various Bureau activities and work areas, the Committee stated that, within the present framework of financial support from Saltonstall-Kennedy funds, it was their view that a proper balance has been achieved in the allocation of the Saltonstall-Kennedy funds.

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